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Kern

The Use of the Library
in the
Institute

such a one that a millstone—I mean that the conditions required him to teach all day and be responsible for the care of one room. Every principal should be a teacher. He should have one or more daily classes, any class in any grade. If he finds himself out of sympathy with a teacher, let him, taking care to prepare for the ordeal, send her to visit another school, and take charge of her room for the day. He will be sure to learn something, and like Saul the son of Kish, may find a greater thing than he sought. If he wants his teachers to know something of the history of education, let him study it with them, instead of trying to teach it to them. If he wants them to teach English better, let him join the reading circle and read, with them, Professor Hinsdale's book (instead of suggesting to them that the reading circle work is for the country teachers only). If he wants the spirit of inquiry, investigation, and experiment to grow in his teachers let him join with them in inquiry, investigation, and experiment. In short, let us all face the fact that the normal schools are, as yet, wholly inadequate to provide a supply of properly prepared teachers and that the principal must make it his chief study and main business first of all to supply deficiencies, and then to promote growth of prepared and unprepared teachers alike. The incompetents who, by the way, are not so numerous as it is alleged they are, cannot be discharged by wholesale, and the competents will revert, if the wholesome stimulus and intelligent direction of a growing principal is not ever present and ever active.

We want our teaching to be rich, vital, and stable. To make it so we must pay the price. The principal must grow that the teachers may grow. If he does not grow his influence will be fatal to any surrounding growth. The teacher must grow or the children cannot. More fatal

to child growth than any miasma, is the blighting influence of a moss-backed teacher. He only arrests growth, and growth is the final cause of education. So trained and growing principals must precede the growing teachers. The best possible investment, just now, for any school board is for skilled supervision. It will, even during the millennium, when skilled labor has become the best investment, remain the second best. But pending the day when it shall cease to be true that the greater part of the labor is average or unskilled, the oversight, leadership, and direction must continue to be of the first importance.

"If all that which has been spent upon this building results in the reformation of one boy, it is money well spent," said Horace Mann, in dedicating a costly reformatory.

"Mr. Mann, do you think one boy is worth all that money?"

"Yes," said he, "if it is my boy, or your boy."

The growing teacher may sometimes be recognized by that test, for sympathy is a sign of life—and life is a condition of growth. Every boy must be "my boy," to the teacher.

The teacher who, combining the qualities of D'Arcy Thompson's three masters, without any vulgar instruments of punishment, but with imperturbable good temper, an infectious sense of humor, and the unseen force of a noble character, can maintain order; by the contagion of her own zeal for work and respect for industry, banish all shuffling and sloth; and by the spirit of fellowship become the fellow-student quite as much as the mistress of her pupils,—who can herself enter the kingdom by becoming as a little child,—is the growing teacher and she will promote the growth of her children. The principal who would promote the growth of his teachers must not only keep in touch and

sympathy with the children, but he must be large enough to maintain a relation to them analagous to the relation he wishes them to maintain to the children.

As for the McChoakumchids, and Gradgrinds, and Dryasdusts, they are beyond redemption. Let us bury them decently as fast as they die.

THE USE OF THE LIBRARY IN THE INSTITUTE.

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In this paper there will be no attempt to discuss the purpose of the institute, but rather, to tell of the value of the library as a factor in its evolution. And in this evolution the new factor must not supplant all the best of the old, but to supplement what is good of the lecture method or scholastic review in the average institute. Whatever may be said of the value of the summer institute, for us it seems better to hold it during the spring vacation. For one reason stronger work can be done by the teacher. And this element of work is the essential condition of the library feature. Whatever may be said of the value of an examination to hold the teachers' interest in the institute, the writer believes there is a better way, and no thought of an examination enters the mind of superintendent, instructor or teachers. Our annual institute is held the last week in March. In the organization of his first institute the superintendent had in mind the great help he had received from the Rockford Public Library during the seven years he was instructor in the high school; also the pleasure it afforded him to see his classes enjoy the reading and discussion of books in connection with class room work. The library spirit was growing in the city schools and why not encourage its growth in the country school. It seemed wise, therefore, to devise some way to put the country teachers in touch with the wealth of material in our most excellent city library. A selection of three subjects only was made

for our institute, the purpose being to do more thorough work in this restricted field and not attempt to touch all the subjects in a single year. The subjects selected were: Practical Pedagogy, U. S. History and Zoology. The instructors were requested to furnish outlines of their work and each to furnish the superintendent with a list of books that would be suitable to supplement his course of instruction.

The Rockford Public Library Board very gladly gave the superintendent permission to draw out all the books necessary for the institute week. Not a book was lost or reported damaged and the total expense to the institute fund for the use of the city library was seventy-five cents for carting the books from the library rooms (and return) to the high school building where the institute was held. The members of the library force gave their heartiest cooperation. They packed the books in boxes, adding whatever they thought valuable to the lists furnished them. (A list of these books will be sent by addressing County Superintendent Kern, Rockford, Ill.)

The program was so arranged that the lecture method was combined with the library study. Each teacher had one period (forty minutes for all periods) for laboratory work in zoology, three periods for library reading and four lecture periods daily. The books were placed in different rooms, in charge of an instructor. The forenoon of each day was largely spent in reading along the general lines to be

discussed in the afternoon lecture. During the morning hours the time of the instructor was largely taken up in making the teachers better acquainted with books; in assigning authorities to be read; giving general directions regarding their reading, or planning with individuals along any particular line of reading in which they were interested. Thus in U.S. History five general ideas were taken as the basis for reading and discussion during the week, viz: (1) Our Constitution Making, (2) The Organization of Government, (3) Political Parties, (4) The Doctrine of Secession, (5) Industrial Development since 1865. There was no thought, of course, of exhausting any one of these topics during the week, but they afforded plenty of room for reading. And the results of the wide reading would be brought out in the afternoon discussions. As the instructor in history, Principal Parker of the Rockford High School, said of the main object: "(1) To endeavor to bring to the minds of the teachers of the county a realization of the wealth of material upon the history of our country, and, by leading them out of the brief text books to the broader fields, to inspire them with a desire to know and to teach real history rather than outlines, dates and memory devices. (2) That the teachers might get a start in a small way toward seeing our history as a history of the growth of ideas, instead of groups of events bound together by nothing but similarity in time. (3) To provide a scheme of instruction which should appeal to the one who had had little opportunity for historical study, be interesting to him who had begun to see the possibilities ahead and give opportunity to the more advanced student to revel in that which he loved." And so the laboratory work in zoology was supplemented by scientific reading; the discussions in practical pedagogy aided by study of books on

pedagogy and psychology, while wider views of the history of our country and the significance of our institutions were gained by coming in contact with the great historical writers. Now as to results. First as to the amount of work done. Printed blanks were distributed twice daily on which teachers reported their attendance at lectures, their library readings, giving subject, author and pages read. And, while a number of pages read in a subject does not necessarily mean much, the reports on file show 8,500 pages in science, 4,553 pages in pedagogy and 6,573 pages in history read by the teachers during the four real working days of the week. This does not take into account the great amount of reading done in the evening. It was very gratifying to see the interest of the teachers in this respect. The rooms were often thronged at the close of the day with teachers taking out books for evening reading, and the institute note books show that they were read. Also there was real earnestness and enthusiasm among the teachers for work. The spirit manifested was an inspiration itself. This contact with books revealed to teachers their limitations. For the teacher whose historical knowledge had been acquired from Barnes' School History, barely sufficient to pass an examination for a certificate, not to say anything about teaching it, the works of the great historical writers revealed to them how little they comprehended the true significance of history. This has created a dissatisfaction with present attainments and methods of teaching. For the first time they caught glimpses of better things for themselves and their pupils. History is more than dates and pedagogy and science means much more than before. This unrest and the consequent desire for self-improvement are shown in the way that teachers are building up professional li-

braries of their own. The library spirit is growing with the country teacher and school. In many instances teachers who at the close of our institute confessed how little they knew, during the past two months have bought four, five, six and eight books and are reading and studying as they never have. With five years of this kind of work it will need no prophet to foretell the result. Such a spirit is an inspiration to a superintendent.

Of course Winnebago County is fortunate in having such a generous spirited, high minded public library as that of the city of Rockford. If such an educational force were not available the superintendent feels that in some way he would get books for institute work. The use of the library is a practical factor in the evolution of the teacher. In no better way perhaps can teachers become acquainted with books. An acquaintance thus made will surely ripen into the closest friendships and reading will be carried on after the institute closes. The traveling institute library is practicable, and if in future library legislation this feature could be incorporated so that from the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction there should go forth cases of books on pedagogy, history, science, literature, art, etc., to the various county institutes to be read by the teachers who never come in contact with such books, the writer firmly believes that no one thing can do more to improve the average institute and to quicken the professional spirit of the average teacher. But future library legislation is uncertain. Cannot something be done to create a spirit for professional reading and study in counties not so fortunate as Winnebago and a few others in our state? It is presumed that every superintendent would be glad to have his teachers read in connection with the courses of instruction at the annual institute if only the

books were obtainable. Suppose the institute fund is only \$125. The superintendent has usually employed three or four school principals of the county at a salary of \$25 or \$30 a piece for the week who have endeavored to earn their money by talking to the teachers in solemn conclave assembled. Subjects as reading, spelling, arithmetic, history, grammar, geography, etc., are handled in a more or less refreshing manner preparatory to the examination which shall crown the week's work. The teacher is quite enthusiastic over the work done—when in the presence of the superintendent asking for a renewal of her certificate. Now instead of trying to handle all the subjects in five days, take two, pedagogy and U.S. History for one year and really try to do some thorough work in them. Instead of two or three principals of village schools, import one strong man if you have to pay him \$75 for the week. That will leave \$50 in the institute fund. By wise management the necessary incidental expenses need not be over \$20 for a small institute. This will leave \$30 to be expended for books to supplement the course of the instruction in one of the subjects, pedagogy or history, and \$30 judiciously expended will buy quite a good deal of reading matter. Let this be done for a few years and that county will have a small but good library for professional study by the teachers not only during the institute, but available for use throughout the year. This is a legitimate use of the institute fund and more in keeping with the spirit of the law than much of the expenditure now made from that fund. One result of such an institute will be that the teachers themselves will catch the library spirit and begin to buy books for their own use.

Such has been the result in our county and this library spirit, started at the annual institute has been quickened and in-

tensified by the use of a small pedagogical library for study in preparation for the monthly teachers' meetings during the present school year. During the summer vacation the superintendent made a selection after a careful examination of twenty-two of the latest and best educational books. This was cut down one-half and the following eleven selected for the teachers, viz:

Blow, Letters to a Mother.

Compayre, Lectures on Pedagogy.

Compayre, Psychology Applied to Education.

Hinsdale, Horace Mann and Common School Revival in the United States.

McCormick, Suggestions on Teaching Geography.

McMurry, Method of the Recitation.

McMurry, Special Method in Science in the Lower Grades.

Taylor, Study of the Child.

Tompkins, Philosophy of Teaching.

Tompkins, Philosophy of School Management.

White, School Management.

Programs comprising readings from the various books were made out for seven months of the year, with opportunities for plenty of practical discussions at the meetings. At the organization of the various divisions the teachers bought what books they pleased and most made provision to exchange so that the great majority thus have access during the year to the entire set. The number of teachers enrolled is 174, all outside of the city of Rockford. The number of books purchased by these 174 teachers is 610, distributed as follows: Nineteen copies of Blow's Letters to a Mother; twenty-two copies of Compayre's Lectures on Pedagogy; forty-one copies of Compayre's Psychology Applied to Education; twelve copies of Hinsdale's Horace Mann and the Common School Revival in the United States; sixty-nine copies of McCormick's

Suggestions on Teaching Geography; eighty-five copies of McMurry's Method of the Recitation; 114 copies of McMurry's Special Method in Science for the Lower Grades; thirty-six copies of Taylor's Study of the Child; fifty-four copies of Tompkin's Philosophy of School Management; sixty-two copies of Tompkin's Philosophy of Teaching; and ninety-six copies of White's School Management. By the wise selection the teachers made so that there could be an exchange of books among those teaching or residing near, the above 610 books are equivalent to 1,200 books at least. The library spirit thus started at the annual institute is strengthened for the next institute. One result is that the teachers are interesting the pupils in the Pupil's Reading Circle and books are being bought by pupils and schools. Also patrons and school officers are awakening to the importance of district school libraries. The use of the library in institute and teachers' meetings, as an educational force to quicken life and give great inspiration for work must take the place for the country teacher of the Teachers' Association Meetings like this, for some years to come. They do not go. They cannot afford it, many of them. True, better service will give better pay, but it is a question whether the average country teacher, taking into consideration his limitations, would get his money's worth to go to some of our association meetings and get lost in a crowd of 1,500 persons. Ofttimes the programs are not practical enough for the one who has to do the drudgery of the average country district. The papers are long and in terms quite beyond the average teacher in order, seemingly, that the writer may appear learned. The time is dragged on and the discussions far from profitable. We superintendents and principals who sit in hotel corridors and smoke (or are smoked), say, "oh, well,

after all the best part perhaps the chief part of our meetings is the personal conversation we have about our work." But the teacher from the country cannot have the benefit of this conference in a quiet corner. And if the association meeting is to prove an inspiration to country life it must be taken to the country. It has occurred to the writer that if an association could be formed of three or four counties and the place of meeting passed around in a regular circuit, and if county superintendents of those counties do some real hard work for a few years, the country teacher would soon appreciate the value of association gatherings. Put much thought on the programs. Get men to take part who are an inspiration. Try to make the discussions practical for school room work, at the same time be inspiring enough to give teachers a glimpse and a longing for that condition of emancipation from the mechanics of school teaching.

An association gathering has, or should have, an uplifting influence on the schools and educational interests of the city where its annual or semi-annual sessions are held. But this quickening influence is never felt in the smaller towns. Such a meeting never comes into some counties. The Northern Illinois gets around to the principle cities about once in five years. It is then a large unwieldy body, taking hotels and homes for accommodations. For obvious reasons its great influence cannot be felt in Mt. Carroll, Galena or Woodstock by meetings held in those places, and others that might be mentioned. But an association on a smaller scale could be a power for good in every county. If held in this county this fall, all the county teachers as well as village and city teachers would attend. The county superintendent could see to it that every teacher was there. If held in adjoining county in the spring, then, of course, all

the teachers from that county and with a majority, in time, of those from the other counties, especially those living near the county line, and so on. These gatherings will quicken the interests of patrons, who, as they are held now, perhaps never hear of the meeting, much less attend its sessions. It is easy enough for us who live in cities to take an early train and ride 75 or 100 miles to a teachers' meeting. Our salaries, in comparison with the average district school teacher, enable us to do this without feeling the expense. But for the country teacher who has to arise before daylight, hitch up and drive eight or ten miles over indifferent roads to reach an early morning train, then pay the expense of a trip out of a small wage; well, they don't go and won't go. Let us be charitable towards them and devise some means to take the meetings to them. Let us not sneer at the country school or country teacher. There is worth there. The leaders in education, business and all activities of life for the twentieth century are coming from a thousand hills and plains. Let us not spurn the ladder by which we, some of us, have ascended. So while our country teachers of Winnebago county cannot or do not go to hear Tompkins, McMurray and others, and while Tompkins, McMurray and others cannot or do not come to them, the superintendent feels that he is doing the next best thing, viz: bringing the country teachers and the books of Tompkins, McMurray and others together in the annual institute, monthly teachers' meetings, the school rooms and homes. Thus by reading, study and discussion, life answers back to life. While this use of books may not be practical in some localities, in the north country, in the land of Winnebagoes, the use of the library as a factor in the evolution of the institute, the teacher, the superintendent, and the school will be continued for three years more at least.



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